

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STARK SPEAKS OUT AGAINST PATRIOT ACT

WASHINGTON - Last night, U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA, 13th) voted against the USA PATRIOT Act. It passed the House by a vote of 257-171. Stark's statement follows:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3199, the USA PATRIOT and Terrorism Prevention Reauthorization Act, because I swore to uphold the Constitution. The PATRIOT Act clearly violates all Americans' Fifth Amendment right to due process and Fourth Amendment guarantee against unreasonable search and seizure, among others. If the Government takes our rights away in order to supposedly defend them, what are we even fighting for?

"Using the PATRIOT Act over the last four years, the Bush Administration has monitored meetings of citizens who dare to criticize their government. It has searched homes without warrants and listened in on phone conversations without any reasonable justification.

"If this is the price of security, now is a fair time to ask: what security have we gained? The terrorist who mailed anthrax to the U.S. Capitol and shut down a Senate office building for two weeks is still at large, but a University of Connecticut graduate student who studies anthrax in Petri dishes was charged with bioterrorism. The cargo that rides aboard almost every commercial flight remains unsecured, but a New Jersey man faces up to 20 years in prison under the Patriot Act for looking at stars with his seven year-old daughter because he shone a laser beam on an airplane.

"I am proud to represent one of the most diverse congressional districts in the country. The people of the 13th District know that your ethnicity, religion or country of origin is not indicative of your commitment to community – or anything else, for that matter. That's why cities across the East Bay were among the first in the nation to pass resolutions condemning the PATRIOT Act. I stand with them in support of those actions.

"Mr. Speaker, searching my constituents' homes and not telling them, collecting information about what they read, and tracking their e-mail and web usage is a war on liberty to create a false sense of security. To paraphrase one of our founding fathers, Ben Franklin, the nation that sacrifices liberty for security deserves neither. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this unpatriotic act."

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Thursday, 21 July 2005
